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# The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

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*Senior cross-country captain Lucas DiCerbo talks about how the sport has impacted his time in high school*

Volume LXI Issue I—October 2018

## Mass. holds historic primary elections

Maia Hahn-DuPont
Manon LeDonne
Staff Writers

On Sept. 4, Ayanna Pressley, the first woman of color to serve on the Boston City Council, won the Democratic primary for the House of Representatives. She is currently running unopposed and is therefore poised to become the first ever black congresswomen from Massachusetts.

Ayanna Pressley is a nominal winner. She beat Mike Capuano in the primaries, who has held the congressional seat for ten terms (a total of 20 years).

"We built a movement. This was a people-powered, broad, deep and diverse grassroots coalition that we built one door, one voter, one living room at a time," Pressley said to WBUR.

This race is not an ordinary election. It is a turning point in history for women and people of color. Elizabeth Warren, currently running unopposed for the Democratic Party for the US Senate in Massachusetts, is another woman looking to maintain her position in Congress. Arizona has exclusively women running in the race for Senate, and half of the women running in the primaries in the country have won already.

Lexington continues to reflect this. Two out of the five candidates in the race for State Representative for Lexington's district were women, and Michelle Ciccolo won the race.

As for people of color, this election holds great significance as well: Jay Gonzalez is up against Charlie Baker in the run for Massachusetts governor, and an increased number of Latino people are also in the race.

Is Massachusetts politics becoming more progressive? Ayanna Pressley's success as a black woman indicates that the answer is yes, at least with respect to racial and gender diversity. .

"It is time to show Washington, D.C., both my fellow Democrats, who I hope will stand with us and Republicans who may stand in our way... change is coming and the future belongs to all of us" Pressley said, speaking to her win.

Staff photo by Megha Prasad
*Michelle Ciccolo won the race for state representative.*

Some students, such as Anna Nelson, are pleased by the increase in diversity. .

"I think it's absolutely amazing that there's finally minority groups being represented in government and I really hope that during elections for higher office the diversity continues," Nelson said.

Other students pose possible explanations for this increase in diversity.

"[This change is] a reaction to people feeling generally underrepresented in the past political years and wanting to stand up for what they believe in," Melanie French, a junior at LHS, said.

## Mission Impossible brings originality back to sequels

Narek Sahakian
A&E Editor

This past summer's blockbuster season was filled predominantly with sequels. Usually sequels are associated with a lack of originality. However, one film stood above the rest and dominated the blockbuster box office, successfully bringing back beloved characters and memorable moments that are unique to the franchise alone. Mission: Impossible-Fallout is the best movie of this summer, achieving everything a sequel should, and then some. Not only did it create a new mission with nail-biting action sequences and choreographed stunts, but it also managed to expand upon the series as a whole by both strengthening and questioning the characters' relationships with each other and the world they inhabit.

Christopher McQuarrie returns as the director of his second film in the franchise. His previous film, Mission: Impossible-Rogue Nation, already managed to take the franchise to the next level. And now, he continues the story from the previous film, reprising the main heroes and villains while introducing more complexity to each of their narratives. Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) returns for a new mission, accompanied again by the core Impossible Mission Force team, including Benji Dunn (Simon Pegg), Luther Stickell (Ving Rhames) and Alan Hunley (Alec Baldwin). Their mission is to track down lost plutonium cores and to prevent them from being detonated as nuclear bombs by the terrorist organization known as the Apostles.

At one point, the main antagonist, Solomon Lane, challenges the team's mission, forcing the audience to question the entire existence of the hero team and what they stand for. The challenge not only provides a physical threat to the hero, but also a threat to Ethan's entire ideology. Even the meaning of the word "fallout" is hinted at in this confrontation with Solomon Lane, when he refers to an effect or consequence of a certain action, specifically the team's intervention in terrorist organizations. It shows the delicate balance in the hero and villain dynamic, and the consequences of intervening with the opposite side.

Throughout the film, the hero is forced to make a decision between saving a life or saving the mission. This theme of sacrifice is shown as a foundation to the whole film. We first see it in one of the opening sequences, where Ethan is faced with the choice of saving his teammate or the mission of gathering the plutonium cores. Then Ethan has to save either an innocent French police officer who gets tangled up in their complicated mission while on duty, or the mission of detaining Solomon Lane. Lastly, Ethan has to either escape with the love of his life or leave her behind while he saves the world.

By the time the exciting theme song rolls in with the final credits, the audience has been fully immersed in the world of Ethan Hunt and the Impossible Mission Force. Perhaps that is why it's named the Impossible; because unlike many film franchises or sequels, it effectively creates an original story that enhances its series with every new mission. As the title suggests, even the impossible is possible.

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# Overcrowding is happening now, and it's not good

Jinhee Heo
News Editor

Overcrowding is an issue that has become exponentially worse. As the Commons get tighter in space due to substantial increases in the student population, more students are eating outside or in hallways. Teachers are either forced to raise their I Block class caps or sign students up to random available rooms.

The Lexington High School student population is growing and continues to increase each year, but with the amount of physical space remaining the same, students and faculty face new challenges.

"In the broadest sense, enrollment growth comes in two ways. [One is] new housing and development and [the other is] an increase in the number of households with children of school age. In my opinion, our enrollment growth comes from our success as a school system; Lexington is a desirable place to live for families with school-aged children," Associate Principal Baker said.

Although the effects of overcrowding aren't overtly detrimental now, serious issues are on the horizon. With greater class sizes comes less classroom space, which disproportionately impacts students with mobility issues. Without proper heating and cooling systems, crowded classrooms would also exponentially increase physical discomfort.

The impacts could also directly affect teaching techniques. A less flexible physical space could restrict educational creativity.

"We want to teach courses that are interesting and dynamic for students where you can get up and move around or you can shift the layout of a room within a class period. Because we are pretty tightly squeezed between spaces it's hard to do any of that pedagogically. The space doesn't support us very well for much innovation. The way that we teach and innovate is being hindered by the way that our classrooms are built," Chelsea Baum, an English teacher, said.

More obviously, a higher student-teacher ratio would mean less personalized attention per student. In both Jonas Clarke and Diamond middle schools, multiple half-teams are stretching teachers thin as they are forced to teach multiple subjects. As students from boom years enter LHS, overcrowding will be exacerbated. In fact, the term "boom year" may prove to be obsolete as each incoming freshman class is enormous without exception.

Long-term projects are underway. Plans to build a new high school are in the works, but construction will not begin soon. The modulars added new rooms but are a temporary and multi-million dollar solution.

Instead, intermediate steps must be taken. Pedagogical techniques in classrooms and technological innovation must be designed to accommodate a larger student body.

# Collegebored - *Screams*

Jeffrey Gu
Columnist

Funny story, Talia asked me to write this column for the Musket about 3 days ago, and I have a rough draft due, like, today. She seems to think I know how to write good.

Fair warning: I don't.

Last year's College Bored column, penned by Lasya Rajan, was extremely well-written and offered eloquent, insightful reflections on the intricacies of the college admissions process.

Hi! I'm Jeffrey! I'll be writing a little more like this:

AAAAAAAAAHHHSLKDJF;KSDJ;AS;DKLFJ

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa.

Hear that? That's the sound of my screaming about college apps.

You're screaming too? Great! Let's scream together!

There are many, many screamworthy aspects of the college application process. Choose where to spend the next four years of your life based on some generic adjectives and random statistics in our undergraduate admissions brochure that fails to actually distinguish us from any other college! Show us why you're a good fit for our institution by encapsulating the entirety of your personality and life experiences in one extremely contrived 650-word essay! Be authentic, but also if you don't match the specific type of person we want to see on our campus, we'll reject you! You should put lots of careful time and consideration into said essay, but we have to read through a few thousand of these and sure as heck won't get to spend more than 7 minutes on yours! Also, our financial aid timeline is completely separate from our application timeline, and you should probably figure that out sometime too! Do this during first semester of senior year, while you're struggling with all your new classes and still trying to figure out what physics even is! Don't stress, because these few months will determine the next chapter of your life, where you'll be completely on your own, far away from the friends and family you've developed over the last few years!

You get the idea.

But hey! In roughly 19347604820483257 8 days it'll all be over, and we'll be free to develop senioritis and enjoy the last few months of high school. Yes, choosing a college is important, and yes, you should be putting a lot of time and consideration into them. But at the same time, you are so much more than 650 words and a few pages of high school credentials, and a college's acceptance or rejection of you based on an application that was put together over the course of a few months does not and should not mean much in the grand scheme of things.

Even if college apps should be a high priority, they should not become an all-consuming process that drowns out the other good things in life. The world is really cool! People are really cool! You are really really cool! And while going to college is pretty cool, if the application process itself is preventing you from enjoying time with your friends and keeping you up at 2 a.m. scrolling through College Confidential forums, then something's gone amiss.

The other day, my friend found a person on College Confidential who had made an account in 2009 and has made 83665 posts on the forums since then. That's more than a post every hour for nine years. I don't expect any of you to do that, but the principle remains the same – do not sacrifice living your life for college applications.

So lighten up a bit. Spend a day with your family and friends. Go outside and enjoy the last few weeks of beautiful weather. Watch that movie you've been meaning to see. We're all going to be stressed for the next few months, and a lot of us are going to feel like screaming every now and then. That's fine. We can all scream together. Just don't spend all of the next 3 months screaming, ok?

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# Chromebooks are an inconvenient and replaceable solution to equity

Victor Chen
Ekaterina Ivanenko
Staff Writers

Chromebooks are an inconvenient and replaceable solution to equity

Lexington High School is now giving underclassmen students their own electronics for school work. Every freshman and sophomore will now get their own Chromebook. However, this new development has not been well received.

"Chromebook seemed ... inferior to my computer at home, and that they were oddly heavy for their small size," Larry Lin, a sophomore, said.

Sophomore Vivi Torontali shared a similar view, pointing out the difficulty with using the trackpad and the awkward transition between the iOS to Chrome OS operating systems.

"I don't think the switch was a good idea as in the middle schools and in the high school we used Macs for a long time, and were proficient in using it, making the new operating system feel strange," Lin said.his is especially the case as in classes such as Digital Art [where] Macs are still used."

Perhaps the most glaring problem with the Chromebooks is the fact many students already own a personal laptop, some of which were brought specifically for school use, but now seem obsolete.

"Chromebooks have much different settings and it's just different in general, so it's going to take some getting used to, but I would still rather use my own computer," Navia Ivanenko, a sophomore, said.

For some students, the new policy is already causing trouble in their classes.

"As a debater, now I have to bring two separate computers to school everyday as the Chromebooks can't be used for debate," Lin said.

Certain students carry more than one device around the school, so distractions are inevitable and their backpacks will be unnecessarily heavy.

Most of the students understand and applaud the school for pushing for the use of Chromebooks to create a more equal playing field for students, but some of the regulations attached to this policy are overly restrictive.

"If technological equality is the number one priority, then I would suggest to instead buy fewer, better computers that would be distributed to those who don't have access to computers, allowing them to be on par on usability but also not impacting others who have devices because they purchased them for last year," Lin said.

Staff photo by Talia Blatt
*Students make use of new Chromebooks issued by school.*

Some may argue that the purpose of giving everyone Chromebooks unifies the class and allows teachers to better monitor student activity. But while ensuring students pay attention is good for the learning process, they can probably find ways around technological restrictions anyways. Either way, students should learn to police their own behavior. If they're using their personal laptop to play computer games during class, that will reflect in their grades.

Thus, the best solution to solve the current issue of technological inequity is distributing computers to students who need them, not requiring that everyone has the same computer. Any other idea is just a waste of time and resources.

# New parking rules exacerbate competition for spots

Ollie Rouke
Staff Writer

This year, in conjunction with the Lexington Police Department, the Lexington High School administration made significant changes to the parking for students and faculty. The school claims that these changes were necessary, since they didn't have enough permanent parking spots on campus to cover the staff's needs.

The school made a variety of changes to address existing concerns. They added more faculty-only parking, but permitted senior student parking was reduced to 25 spaces and moved to the Worthen Lot. All non-permitted students driving to school are required to park on Worthen Road as well. Lastly, the Lexington Police will be monitoring Park Drive and Clark Street more diligently this year and ticketing cars parked illegally.

While these changes had good intentions, they have created several problems for students. First, the administration reduced the total senior parking spots allotted to students. Senior parking has historically been coveted by students who participate in a raffle to win the chance to purchase a selective spot. Competition is fierce, and with the reduced amount of spaces, even more students have been denied official parking.

"I was hoping to get a senior parking spot this year," Jonny Bachman, a senior, said. "There are only 25 spots now, so I knew my chances were slim."

Permitted senior parking is valued by students because it gives them a parking option a short distance from school. Any LHS driver that is not one of the lucky 25 has only one parking option permitted by the school: Worthen Road.

In years past, many students parked in what is referred to as the "J Lot", or junior lot. The J Lot is a parking area located between the school athletic fields and the math building. Many students would park along the road that connected this area to the school's back entrance.

Unfortunately, this area is now closed off with caution tape, and students risk receiving a ticket if found parking there. It was a questionable decision to restrict access to this area, and it is currently serving no purpose.

This results in overcrowding on Worthen Road, where the cars stretch further down the street than in any year past. Cars are squeezed dangerously close together, and students park in awkward or inconvenient places simply because they have no other spot for their cars.

"I have to arrive to school much earlier than in years past, because Worthen fills up quite quickly," Bachman said.

Although the administration's new rules seem a bit over the top, their more stringent regulation of the new senior lot is a step in the right direction. Students who win the lottery for the senior parking are required to put special stickers on their car to designate their parking status.

In years past, it was very easy for any student to park in the senior lot without fear of a ticket. This year, the administration has been much stricter with checking the senior lot, frequently sending staff out to check on the car stickers. Although this system seems more "fair," the problem would be solved if there were more legal parking spots in the first place.

# Food serves as good analogy for high school life

Elizabeth Zhang
Columnist

Has someone in your life ever told you to eat your vegetables during meals? Being told to do something you don't want to do gets really annoying, doesn't it?

That's exactly how Chris McCandless, the protagonist of Jon Krakauer's Into the Wild, feels before he leaves his life behind to exploring the wild. McCandless is your average college student—he has decent grades, participates in after school activities and has a nice family.

McCandless is talented. However, once being told to obey specific rules associated with each hobby, he comes to a "talent wall" and quits. He doesn't appreciate societal standards and gets bored quite easily. So, one day, he decides to pack up his things and leave civilization altogether, following his dream.

What's your dream? Please don't say it's to get into a "good" college. To get deeper into this question, food is the best analogy.

In the book, Into the Wild, the author writes down a quote that McCandless himself records in his diary: "I sat at a table where rich food and wine in abundance... but sincerity and truth were not; and I went away hungry from the inhospitable board."

When I read this, I could connect it back to my own life. Lexington High School is a great school that provides its students with a top notch education. We have some of the best opportunities in the world, but to me, it's getting stale. Maybe we're so busy trying to stuff it all into our bodies that we don't even pay attention to its blandness. Most students here eat the same meal: we want to go to college, get a job and live the happiest life we can.

If we reach for another dish that we truly love, then I think our lives can be better . Yes, I know it's easier to just take what's given to us on our plates. Maybe your parents are watching you eat it, or even worse, force-feeding it to you. But, just go and eat that other dish you really want to eat. And if you find that dish to be boring after a while, well, go find another one!

Life necessitates exploration. I think a lot of people in society have morphed that thinking into ideas of "but if I don't do this, I won't be happy!" or "but if I want to be happy, I can't just go and explore things—what if I get nowhere!". That's exactly why you need to explore with a purpose. Take your time to deduce the flavors and ingredients of all your options rather than just mindlessly gulping down what's right in front of you.

So, what's your dream? What can you do to be yourself and do the things you want to do? Things will work out in the end. Believe it or not, you were born into this world for a reason. You sit at a table with opportunity in front of you; if only you'd reach out and grasp it.

# Debate team fosters deep learning and competitive success

■ Rebecca Kielar
Editor in Chief

Lexington High School is home to many high-achieving academic clubs and programs, including the debate team. Each year, the team excels in local, statewide and national competitions at both novice and varsity levels.

While anyone can join the debate team, students must first enroll in the debate courses offered at LHS. There are three styles of debate: Lincoln-Douglas, Public Forum and Policy, each differing in rules and topic content.

While Policy and Public Forum debates are executed in teams of two, Lincoln-Douglas debaters compete individually. In Lincoln-Douglas debate, topics change once every two months. Debates in this division are often centered around logic and ethics.

Public Forum debate, conducted in pairs, requires brief speeches followed by three minutes of questions and answers with the opposing team. Topics for this debate style alternate once a month. Debaters in this category are exposed to a wide range of issues, thus allowing them to become knowledgeable in a broad scope of subjects.

Unlike the Lincoln-Douglas and Public Forum debate styles, Policy debate focuses on one topic for the year.

"The lack of change requires us to go in depth on the topics we talk about, and to really understand the logics and laws behind the topic," Justin Lin, a Policy debater and junior at LHS said. Debaters compete in two-person teams, and each debate includes a series of three-minute question-and-answer periods called cross-examination, or cross-ex for short.

Regardless of debate style, members of the LHS debate team garner a more sophisticated understanding of current world issues and further develop skills in research, speech and persuasion.

"I like debate because it forces me to think outside of the box," Lin said. "Not only do I have to think of arguments that are outside of what I believe, but I also need to articulate and convince a judge about an argument that I could fundamentally disagree with."

Aside from its academic benefits, the debate team serves as a close-knit community within the dense LHS student body of more than two-thousand.

"It sounds cheesy, but the people in debate... are some of the nicest people ever. Truly, [debate] contains some of the most open-minded and kind people," Lin said. Just like any sports team, LHS debate provides a supportive network that fosters healthy competition and growth.

It doesn't hurt that the team has a stellar track record. The LHS debate team has won the state championship every year for the past 40 years, and is one of the most highly respected teams nationally.

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*Here is a curated Musket fall-themed playlist for your listening pleasure!*
*Best enjoyed when listened to while sipping a cup of apple cider and watching the leaves turn.*

Holy
Jamila Woods - HEAVN

September
Earth, Wind & Fire - The Eternal Dance

Lost in My Mind
The Head and the Heart - The Head and the Heart

Tiger Striped Sky
Roo Panes - Little Giant

Free Fallin'
John Mayer - Where the Light Is

American Teen
Khalib - American Teen

You Are the Best Thing
Ray LaMontagne - Gossip In The Grain

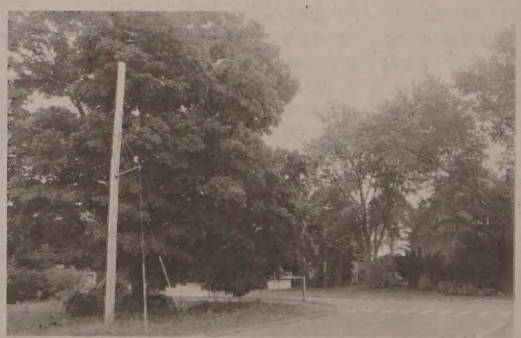
I Feel a Rumblin'
Night Tree - Night Tree

Wait for the Moment
Vulfpeck - My First

The Days That Are to Come
John Vincent III - The Days That Are to Come

New Slang
The Shins - Oh, Inverted World

Growing Up
Run River North - Run River North



Staff photos by Rebecca Kielar

# Mandatory Chromebooks program receives mixed reviews

Pranathi Srirangam
Athena Li
Staff Writers

This past summer, Lexington High School announced the implementation of Google Chromebook integration for freshman and sophomore students in the 2018-2019 school year. Personal laptops are no longer allowed for the underclassmen during class.

Teachers claim the classroom differences to be positive.

"My teaching style hasn't changed too much," Taylor Liljegren, a sophomore and senior English teacher, said. "You really can't lose a digital copy of something, so we save time in not having to repass out things."

The integrated technology is cited to create opportunities for collaboration and creativity.

"One of the things you can do with kids through the cloud is having them able to collaborate while they're at home on a particular thing that then has them preparing for class," Principal Andrew Stephens said. "You never could do that before technology. There are so many different applications of that."

The ability for teachers to curtail student distraction has had material effects. Because Chromebooks don't have messaging apps such as iMessage, it is harder for students to use their technology for non-educational purposes. Teachers are now able to restrict phone usage in class because students have the Chromebooks instead.

Potential problems that teachers face revolve around student dependability, including coming into class with the chromebook charged and ready to use. The ability of the school to select the technological platform creates opportunities as well.

"Having a reliable platform that we have the ability to update through the cloud and remotely allows us to be able to target our professional development for the teachers tied to the device and tied to the particular applications on there," Stephens said. "Then you have a better chance of building a base of capacity for teachers to then start talking about ways to utilize technology at higher and higher levels."

The overall intended function of the integration of Chromebooks is to promote equity.

"The only required thing was that if you were teaching a freshman or sophomore class, you couldn't allow them to use their personal device. They have to use the Chromebooks," Jessica Goodstone, a freshman history teacher, said. "I think it's awesome that they're giving students Chromebooks, [and] not allowing them to use personal devices and creating equity across the board."

Student feedback has been mixed. Some believe the Chromebooks were a downgrade from the years before, in which all students were allowed to bring their personal devices.

"I have basically the same exact computer, an Acer Chromebook, however it is the faster and newer edition," Madelyn Lucente, a freshman, said. "I like and hope that this will cut back on paper, but I wish we could have used our own."

Some students feel that the costs were unnecessary and could have been diverted elsewhere.

"It's fine, I guess. But I wish we could just go to the way it was and supply Chromebooks to the kids that actually need them" Erin Cullinan, a sophomore, said. "This is just unnecessary spending that could have been put to use somewhere else, like air conditioning for the main building."

Some found issues with the manner in which the Chromebooks were integrated.

"Making it mandatory immediately is a problem for people who bought devices already. Ninth graders don't really care … because they were informed of the Chromebook situation. … Sophomores had to buy computers for ninth grade already, so that's a disadvantage for them," Gideon Tzafriri, a freshman, said.

There have also been concerns about functionality.

"The main problem is the software. Chrome OS doesn't allow certain things to run, like Word or Powerpoint. It doesn't allow anything in Windows Office to run. Office has better functionality than Google Suite, and you can't do that on a Chromebook so it's a problem when you need to do that in school," Tzafriri said.

The administration has been notified of these types of concerns.

"We have to consider whether it a convenience or an absolute necessity from a curricular access piece," Stephens said. "If you make that case, then that's something where you do look at whether or not we put a dedicated cart into that particular area so that kids can access it during class and possibly after school."

This year's Chromebook integration is the first step in a five year plan. As it is the first transition year, Stephens urged patience.

"The flexibility we have right now isn't the same as what we will have next year. Everybody just needs to be patient with this," Stephens said.

# LHS implements new door policy

Anelga Hajjar
Rachel Zhang
Staff Writers

For the past 14 years, Lexington High School has been the only school in the town without a badge entry system.

That is until March of last year, when Lexington voters approved a $300,000 upgrade to the security system. This enabled the installation of an RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) door locks system in most of the doors around the school. The system refers to the grey boxes next to the doors that unlock when teachers activate them with their badges. The RFID locks allow a safer and more efficient door locking system throughout the school.

Throughout the day, most of the doors on the outside perimeter of the campus are locked. This is to discourage non-visitors and strangers from entering the building.

"We used to have people just walk through our building to get to the center of town. They weren't even associated with the school. They didn't stop by the office or have visitor badges," Associate Principal Andrew Baker said.

Around the start of the school day, more doors are opened to allow the traffic of students to flow in. "For instance, even though it's an outer perimeter door, the door to Commons II opens earlier in the morning because students are carrying big, heavy instruments into the band room," Baker said. However, it is locked for the rest of the day.

At least one door on the inside perimeter of every building is unlocked throughout the day and automatic universal access doors are always open. This allows for students that are running late, going to the nurse, or entering in between classes, a way to enter the buildings.

An additional layer of security of the new system is that when the bell rings, many more doors open around the inside perimeter of the campus to reduce traffic during passing time. These will be open from the time the bell rings to five minutes after the second bell rings, indicating the start of class. Even students who are tardy still have extra time to get to class before the doors lock, and they have to find an unlocked door.

This new system means that more doors are unlocked on the inside perimeter during the day versus last year, when custodians would open over 80 exterior doors in the building. Last year doors were simply locked because the school did not have a way to put them on an electronic schedule.

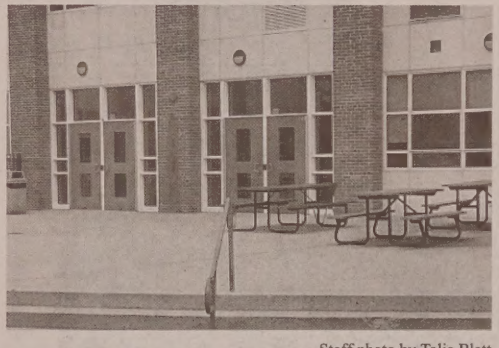
"From the student experience, once the bell rings, there's actually more doors open than there were last year. But it's also a safer place because once you're in class, you have a perimeter of safety around you. It's not perfect, but it's much better than what we had before," Baker said.

Although there was recently an upgrade of the security camera system as well, Baker explains that the school is more focused on evolving its emergency procedures and has been working with the faculty over the last year and a half.

"It's really less about the physical space of the school and making sure that we know what to do in case of emergency in terms of human beings. One of the ways to keep you the safest is to know who people are," Baker said.

For students, this policy was a wake-up call for the potential dangers outside of school. School safety has taken a new meaning recently after the nation witnessed many mass shootings, and the new door locking policy is just one of the reinforcements making the school a safer place.

"I think that although the policy is a step in the right direction of fixing the problem, there's no way we can entirely ensure that LHS will be completely safe and secure. However, I do think that the door policy coupled with ALICE and other precautions are making us more prepared for a threat if one was to arise," Emily Qiu, a junior, said.



Staff photo by Talia Blatt
*New policy locks many of the school's doors while class is in session.*

More content at musketnews2.wixsite.com/lexmusket

# A Capella groups hold annual auditions

Tony Sjodin
Samiha Kazi
Staff Writers

Lexington High School's various a cappella groups held auditions in late September with hopes of finding new members. Auditions for the nine a cappella groups were held from Sept. 25 to Sept. 28 after school.

A cappella groups at LHS are student-led groups of around 11-16 members. A cappella group members must be enrolled in a performance-based music class such as chorus, band, or orchestra in order to participate. Throughout the year, a cappella groups meet together multiple times each week to arrange songs with no instrumental music and practice their performances.

Each year, LHS hosts three Jams in the auditorium, where all the a cappella groups get the chance to perform in front of an audience and showcase their musical talent and the hard work they put into their arrangements.

Many a cappella groups earn the opportunity to perform at several gigs held in nearby locations. A few groups are also invited to perform at competitions such as the Wyvern Invitational A Cappella Festival (WIAF), where they compete against other high school a cappella groups all across New England.

At LHS, there are three all-female groups (Guacamole, Euphoria, and Onomatopoeia), three all-male groups (Rock Paper Scissors, Pitchpipes, and The Gentlemen), and three co-ed groups (PB&J, Mixed Nuts, and Noteworthy). Every year, all nine groups recruit new members where they can meet other musically interested students through auditions.

"Auditions are one of my favorite parts of the year. We try to make it as chill as possible and try to make it more of a get-together sort of event as opposed to auditions," Rohan Purandare, a junior and member of PB&J, said.

Before auditions, the members of each a cappella group often pick a theme to help promote their auditions. Using this theme, they post advertisements that are found around LHS to help encourage students to audition.

"We pick a theme for our audition posters by brainstorming together as a group and coming up with fun ideas. We then meet up to take photos and come up with catchphrases," Ashna Mitta, a junior and member of Onomatopoeia, said.

The students auditioning sing the required audition piece in octets and quartets. Later on in the audition process, individuals are called into rooms to perform their solo piece to current members of the a cappella group.

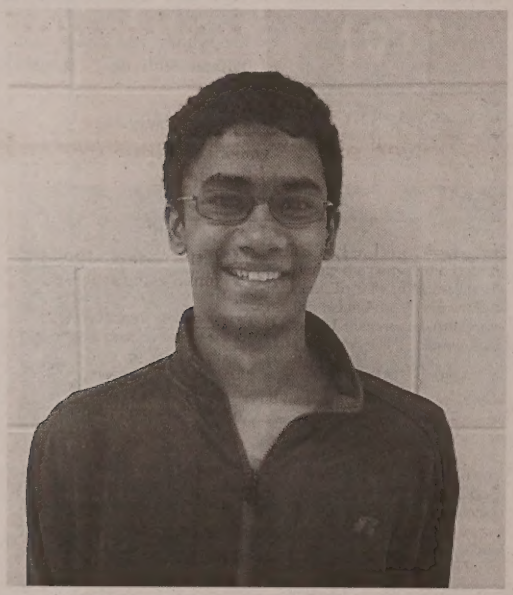
Current members of a cappella groups urge students interested in music and singing to audition for a group, in order to join a community made up of various types of people.

"I personally joined a cappella because I like to sing. When you join an a cappella group, it's almost like you join a family. In a cappella, it does not matter who you are because whoever you are, you will be accepted, respected, and appreciated by your fellow members," Purandare said.

The LHS a cappella program unites a diverse group of students with their shared passion of music.

"I'm so happy I joined a cappella because I love everyone in Ono, they really have changed my life for the better, and I've made so many friends through the a cappella program," Hannah Kim, a junior and member of Onomatopoeia, said.

# Artist Spotlight of the Issue: Arun Asthagiri



Staff photo by Shweta Kondapi
*Arun Asthagiri is a junior at LHS with a passion for music.*

Allison Chaput
Emily Ma
Staff Writers

*Arun Asthagiri, a junior at Lexington High School, is one of three winners of the 2018 Concerto Competition. He auditioned with the first movement of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor and will be performing the same piece on October 16th, accompanied by the LHS Chamber Orchestra.*

Asthagiri's passion began before he had entered the first grade.

"A big Star Wars fan, I used to listen to John Williams with my dad on an old black CD player, and I was fascinated by the grandness and lush melodies that I heard," Asthagiri said. Encouraged by his parents, he picked up his first violin at the age of five.

His musical ability quickly surfaced. Asthagiri was the youngest member of the South Pasadena Children's Orchestra, a group that has performed at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall.

After Asthagiri moved from California to Massachusetts, he became an active member of the New England Conservatory of Music Preparatory School, a music program for high school students run by the college. During his time with the NEC, he has participated in multiple orchestras and chamber music ensembles, and is currently a part of the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, the most advanced group in the program.

The drive to seriously pursue music hit Asthagiri around eighth grade, as his career was unfurling rapidly.

"I immediately and completely immersed myself in the world of music and began practicing two to four hours intensely every day. This has brought me to new levels of playing and a deeper understanding and connection with the instrument," Asthagiri said.

"Arun Asthagiri is one of the most humble players we have had in orchestra. While he has extraordinary skills, he is supportive of all his peers and always gives masterful contributions in rehearsal," Janet Haas, an LHS orchestral conductor who has worked with Asthagiri for two consecutive years, said, also praising his leadership abilities and sense of humor.

For Asthagiri, the creative process is the most valuable and enjoyable part.

"I love the fact that playing the violin means that you are always in a constant pursuit of refining your sound, experimenting and learning. It is inspiring trying to search for one's unique musical ideas while building on experiences and emotions," Asthagiri said.

He spent a lot of time considering his options before ultimately choosing the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto as his audition piece.

"It is one of the most pristine, pure and emotional pieces in the violin repertoire. Taking a mixture of elements from the Classical and Romantic eras, the Mendelssohn concerto has the perfect mix of refinement and pathos, not to mention one of the coolest cadenzas of all time," Asthagiri said.

He also aims to refine his skills while rehearsing and performing for the upcoming performance.

"By playing with Chamber Orchestra, I hope to learn how to better integrate a solo part with a large ensemble. I also want to just have fun making music!" Asthagiri said.

Outside of his musical career, Asthagiri can be found reading, doing math, and annoying his sister.

A note from your Editors-in-Chief:
We're introducing a few new things to The Musket this year - movie reviews, bingo, featured artists and athletes, and a new website!
We want your feedback. Do you like these changes? Are there movies you want us to review? Artists to feature?
Let us know!
Best,
Talia Blatt and Rebecca Kielar

# College Tour Bingo!

Take this bingo on your next college tour!
We dare you to yell bingo if you get a complete row or column!

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *compares library to Hogwarts* | "Do you give credit for AP tests?" | You see someone you know and studiously avoid eye | "We HAVE Greek life but it's no big deal if you don't join" | *shows you the newest, nicest dorms, not the real dorms* |
| "Seniors? Juniors? Siblings dragged against their will?" | *tour guide makes joke about walking backwards* | You try to match seemingly alone parent to seeming alone kid | "Legend has it…" | "Whatever you do, don't step on this square or you won't gradu- |
| "I think we even have *insert obscure, specific club*" | *guide yells* "This is the floor of the library where no one talks" | FREE SQUARE: HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS PROCESS | diIVeRsiTy | *reference to blue light system* |
| *explains the fifty a capella groups* | Quidditch team | Construction | *overinvolved parent asks questions | "We have 3 levels of sports participation" |
| Kid would rather be literally anywhere else; parent is | "We are totally need-based and need-blind." | "We have over ____ clubs" | You find a school you genuinely love | "Undergraduate students do REAL research here" |

# To All the Boys I've Loved Before: Cliché or Masterpiece?

Brendan Cantwell
Managing Editor

To answer the question posed in the title, it is likely the latter. Netflix original To All the Boys I've Loved Before takes the viewer on an emotional rollercoaster lasting an hour and a half. The plot centers around Korean-American high school junior Lara Jean Covey, who, since fifth grade, has written letters to the boys she has had crushes on in order to record her feelings. Her world is turned upside down when her younger sister finds the letters and mails them.

Shockingly, her sister's helpful intentions prove themselves effective when Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky, Lara Jean's seventh grade crush and a recipient of one of the letters, make an agreement to make his ex-girlfriend jealous by having Lara Jean pretend to be his new lover. However, as their fake relationship progresses, they both develop very real feelings for each other and overcome a variety of obstacles to end up together at the conclusion of the film.

Even for those who are not usually fans of the rom-com genre, this movie is a relatable and humorous commentary on the nuances and complexities of high school relationships. This description is coming from a guy who's favorite movies include, Die Hard, Die Hard 2, Die Hard with a Vengeance, Live Free or Die Hard, A Good Day to Die Hard, and Die Hard-inspired Skyscraper. Regardless of what you previously considered to be your cinematic preferences, this movie will have you quoting Peter Kavinsky's iconic "whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa" by the end.

Even so, there are a few criticisms that I have heard leveled at the movie. One that jumps to mind is the preposterous nature of Lara Jean and Peter's relationship and the fact that issues they had before they got together, like how her favorite scrunchy was stolen by Peter's ex, could have been solved through simple communication. Having recently been a high school junior myself, though, I can say that poor communication in a high school relationship is the most realistic thing about the entire movie.

Furthermore, there are a few continuity errors throughout the movie. For example, the words "Ski Trip" on the contract that outlines rules for their fake relationship is written in a different style each time the document is shown on screen, and the fact that Lara Jean's nightgown somehow magically dried off on the walk back to the hotel from the hot tub. These minor filming mistakes do not significantly detract from the enjoyable viewing experience.

Whether you're looking for snarky one-liners, relatable characters and dialogue, or a feel-good happily-ever-after story, this movie has something for everyone. Ultimately, if you want a fun yet moving romantic comedy to watch in the future, I'd definitely recommend giving this one a shot.

# Athletes of the Issue: Lexington Synchronized Ice Skaters

Illana Rosker
Staff Writer

*The Musket is starting a new segment - Athlete(s) of the Issue. We hope to highlight the commitment and success of athletes in the Lexington High School community. If you or a peer would like to be featured, please contact us at musketnews@gmail.com.*

With the start of the new school year, the Hayden Recreation Center skating teams are already in full swing with their practices.

Emily Barnes is a junior at Lexington High School and has been skating since she was five. This year, she is on a new skating team with Hayden.

"I am on the Lexettes, which is a Team USA junior level team," Barnes said.

Barnes' new team boasts a highly successful track record. In 2018, the Lexettes were U.S. National Silver Medalists. They have consistently won top three places at international competitions and have represented the US globally for six years.

Barnes looks forward to traveling internationally with her skating team this year. The Lexettes are likely to compete in France, Croatia, and Switzerland.

"Of course I love being around friends and having an amazing team and community, but as I get older, I love the competitiveness more and more. Getting to travel with the team and compete our programs that we've worked so hard on is an incredible feeling," Barnes said.

While competitive skating is very popular in Lexington, there are also opportunities available for those who want to skate without competing.

"Skating is enjoyable for everyone, no matter what age they are. Hayden has great 'learn to skate' classes and public skate is a time when anyone can skate for fun," Mary Carney, an LHS junior and Hayden synchronized skater, said.

Regardless, balancing high school academics with demanding athletic extracurriculars, an inevitable difficulty for many high school students, soon became a reality for Juliet Stevenson, a senior.

"Some mornings I skate before school and then I go to school. Weekdays, when I skate with my team, I wake up at 6:30 and go to school. Then I go to skating at either 4:30 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. and get home late. I still have to finish homework and go to bed," Stevenson said.

Nonetheless, Stevenson notes her love for the sport despite its rigorous requirements.

"It's not just elegance and smiles. It's intense competition all the time. There are long hours and coaches who intimidate, but it's all worth it for the feeling you get in your stomach when your music starts playing … I love this sport so much," Stevenson said.

The common denominator among the skating experiences of Barnes, Carney, and Stevenson is not just the large time commitment; their shared athletic passion and drive motivate them through a busy schedule.

Staff photos by Matt Pearlman
*Mary Carney is a member of the sychronized skating teams at Hayden.*

# Soccer teams host fundraiser at opening game

Shweta Kondapi
Sports Editor

On Wednesday, Sept. 5, the Lexington boys soccer teams hosted their first home games of the year at Lincoln Fields.

Tickets purchased for it supported The Outreach Program for Soccer, a community-based organization geared towards player development for children and young adults who have physical and/or intellectual challenges.

The main source of fundraising came from raffle tickets sold to locals and students at school. The raffle winners were announced at the end of the boys home opener on the same day.

Prizes for the raffle winners were gift cards generously provided by businesses in Lexington, which included Wilson Farm, Tricon Sports, Tres Petite Creperie, Royal India Bistro, Nellios Gourmet Deli, The Upper Crust Pizzeria, Lexx Restaurant, Fruitée Yogurt, Abbott's Frozen Custard, Rancatore's, and One2One Bodyscapes Personal Training.

"We would like to extend a sincere thank you to the business who provided gift cards and helped make the fundraiser a success," Knut Lundstrom Svahnqvist, senior captain of the varsity soccer team, said.

The boys were able to sell 500 raffle tickets, raising more than $1,000 for TOPS. As for the game, the Lexington varsity team beat Melrose High School, 1-3.

# Cross Country captain discusses goals in current season

Staff photos by Linda Kong
*Lucas Dicerbo is one of the captains of the LHS cross country team.*

Christina Li
Chief Writer

Athletics are a large part of many students' lives at LHS. The cross country team in particular helps shape the life of Lucas DiCerbo, a senior. He is a current cross country team captain at LHS, and has been a part of the team since freshman year. He discovered running years earlier, in middle school.

Since then, his running career has taken off. Running plays several roles in DiCerbo's life.

"From an everyday stress reliever, to an easy way to hangout and catch up with my friends… running is essential to maintaining a balance in my life. It is probably the best possible thing for my mental health. The time commitment, anywhere between 2 and 4 hours a day, really forces me to have my priorities straight and focus on the things that matter… That's not to say it's not hard to manage it all."

Being a leader within the community, he places a lot of emphasis on the strong bond of the team.

"I love the cross country team. Suffering through hill repeats, dynamic stretches, coach's weird jokes, and endless mileage can bring so much [unity]. Yes, the races are technically individual, but every single other thing on this team is done together. We train, stretch, and eat team dinners together. There is no separation by grade or by gender… [and there is] an unwritten expectation for this team to avoid any sort of drama or controversy."

He describes one of his passions as impacting LHS in positive ways. Being a captain of the cross country team provides DiCerbo with an opportunity to positively influence the community and his peers.

"It's (being a captain) about keeping the team open to everyone and making it a welcoming community for anybody, … for those 2 hours every day, they are just another member of the team, with the same goals and aspirations as everyone else: to be the best runner that they can be. If we as captains are able to make this community happen at every practice, I would say that we have done our job correctly."

His goals for the season are closely tied to the friendly team dynamic he works to maintain.

"As a team, we hope to win the state title for the first time. I would love it if everyone else on the team who won't be racing at the end of the season came out to cheer on the top 7 in those final few postseason meets. Another goal of mine is for every single athlete on the team to be able to meet at least one good friend - personally, I can say that my closest friends all run cross country, so I think it's a really great environment to meet new people!"

Throughout his career, DiCerbo has identified one of his strengths as an athlete as his commitment to the sport.

"I am willing to go the extra mile to ensure that I am being the best at it that I personally can be - whether that's extra stretching, rolling, PT or core after practice."

He describes the physical payoff of such persistence as rewarding.

"A few years ago at running camp, I had had a cramp during a run, around the 7th mile. It was super painful but by the last few miles, it had miraculously disappeared and I felt like I was absolutely flying. Instead of stopping at mile 11 like I was supposed to, I kept going for an extra 2.1 miles. It wasn't so much the accomplishment as [it was] how incredible I felt during the run. This true runner's high is something I think every runner searches for and I've been lucky to find it even just a few times. It keeps me coming back to the sport, especially through all of the days that are much harder."